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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART III. EUROPE

Section 2 - Armenia

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03008

III.2 ARMENIA

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee and internally displaced population

1. At 31 December 1993, Armenia hosted some 417,700 refugees and internally displaced persons originating from Azerbaijan (260,000), Nagorno-Karabakh (57,000) and areas in Azerbaijan adjacent to it (17,900), as well as from Abkhazia (5,800). There were also some 77,000 internally displaced Armenians. All refugees are ethnic Armenians, and live mainly in cities throughout the country. A small percentage live in rural areas. In 1993 some 140,000 refugees had been identified by UNHCR as being in need of international assistance. This number has increased to 180,000 in 1994, and includes some groups of internally displaced persons.

2. Distribution of most relief items is calculated on the basis of an average of four persons per family. It is estimated that at least 24 per cent of the beneficiary group consists of children below the age of 18 and some 28 per cent are elderly above the age of 55 years. The majority of the adult population between 18 and 55 years of age are women.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

3. Armenia, facing a continuing decline in its economic situation, received no new influx of refugees. According to the Government, some 37,000 persons out of the 57,000 registered as at the end of 1993, returned to Nagorno-Karabakh, and an estimated 20 per cent of the entire population may have left the country for the Russian Federation and other destinations to avoid the harsh winter conditions which were compounded by an acute shortage of food and fuel. The near total breakdown of industry due to lack of energy and a 1,700 per cent inflation rate left some 80 per cent of the remaining population unemployed.

4. Subsequent to the Government's accession to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol on 6 July 1993, UNHCR continued its efforts to provide training in refugee law and asylum matters to government and non-governmental organization (NGO) officials through seminars and workshops. These activities will be further pursued and will include strategies for achieving successful integration of the refugees, as a return to their country of origin can at this stage not be expected.

5. The majority of UNHCR's beneficiaries in Armenia are refugees for whom a long-term solution, such as local integration, has yet to be found. The special programme was consequently converted into the 1994 Annual Programme.

Programme objectives and priorities

6. Due to the deteriorating economic situation in the country, UNHCR assistance is focused on the provision of life-sustaining assistance and shelter to the most needy groups of refugees and displaced persons.

7. Some projects will be developed to improve prospects for skills development and self-sufficiency.

8. UNHCR is working closely with the Government, both at the central and local levels, to assist in strengthening the registration system for protection and assistance purposes. Refugee law training, institution building and promotion of human rights, as well as public information activities to explain the roles of the United Nations and UNHCR, are also being undertaken.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

9. The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) takes care of storage and the distribution of food and other relief items throughout the country as well as the storage of materials used in the ongoing shelter programme.

10. The Armenian Government, through the State Committee for Refugees (SCR), registers refugees and displaced persons, provides support for the development of local infrastructure as well as for the identification and prioritization of needs related to the shelter programme.

11. Since early 1993, a consultant from the Danish Refugee Council established the UNHCR shelter programme which, in 1994, was handed over to OXFAM-UK.

12. OXFAM-UK is also responsible for health education among refugees as well as for the procurement of health equipment and supplies.

13. Kerosene, which is of great importance in Armenia, is procured through the Fund for Democracy and Development.

14. Agriculteurs Français et Développement International, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA) implement agricultural projects. YMCA and VOCA also implement small income-generation projects.

15. The Armenian Assembly of America has assumed overall responsibility for the afforestation activities.

16. Basic food requirements are met by WFP. Distribution of food commodities is coordinated and shared with WFP in accordance with the terms of the UNHCR/WFP Memorandum of Understanding.

General Programmes

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

17. The programme was funded under Special Programmes in 1993.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

18. To alleviate the current situation and to facilitate the integration of refugees into Armenian society, the programme will focus on agriculture,

income-generation and small business components addressing the needs of 180,000 refugees of both rural and urban background.

19. These activities are aimed at creating conditions for making refugees self-reliant through the establishment of small projects capable of yielding quick results and providing a relatively stable income.

20. Special emphasis will be placed on skills training of single women heads of family in order to enhance their capability to support their families.

21. The ongoing shelter programme has been expanded in 1994. In accordance with the Armenian Government's position, priority is being given to completing unfinished buildings where refugees and displaced persons are housed, and where this can be accomplished with modest inputs. In addition, UNHCR undertakes repair work on communal centres, upgrades basic village infrastructure, provides container houses, and coordinates the construction of small concrete housing units for rural refugees who have been allocated plots of land by the Government.

22. The food distribution programme has been divided between UNHCR/WFP and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Sabotage of supply routes created delays and necessitated the identification of alternative routes.

23. As of mid-1994, a more cost-effective distribution of bulk food instead of food parcels will be implemented. As the ARCS will not distribute bulk food, UNHCR will use the existing distribution system at the district level. Simultaneously, IFRC will cease to supply food and UNHCR/WFP will assume total responsibility. The district food distribution system will be strengthened by the establishment of field units in four regional centres, funded by United Nations Volunteers (UNV).

24. The sectoral breakdown for the initial and revised 1994 and initial 1995 care and maintenance allocation is as follows (in US dollars):

Sector	Initial 1994	Revised 1994	Initial 1995
Food	715,000		
Transport	900,000	74,100	305,000
Domestic needs	0	8,000	957,000
Water	0	0	98,900
Sanitation	300,000	0	108,250
Health	50,000	61,500	100,000
Shelter	300,000	2,332,200	1,304,000
Community services	0	13,100	70,000
Education	0	14,500	95,000
Crop production	0	73,300	423,000
Livestock	0	121,800	178,200
Forestry	180,000	44,800	0
Income-generation	500,000	352,800	276,750
Legal assistance	60,000	10,000	50,000
Agency op. support	150,000	48,900	85,000
Project personnel	397,100	0	0
Programme Delivery	0	752,600	691,700
Total	**3,552,100**	**3,907,600**	**4,742,800**

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

Care and maintenance

25. The 1995 proposal focuses on shelter and income-generation activities in order to meet ever-growing demands for permanent housing as well as for income to facilitate the transition to local integration programmes in the foreseeable future.

26. With a view to improving water supply and sanitary standards at communal centres as well as other refugee settlements, activities are planned for 1995 under these sectors. Emphasis will also be put on health, education and afforestation. Income generation and skills training activities for refugee women will continue, and they will be encouraged to participate actively in health and education activities.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

27. As the Special Operation continued throughout 1993, some funds were used to improve the temporary office which is accommodated at a hotel in Yerevan. Due to the nature of the emergency programme and local conditions, costs for communications and fuel were higher than expected. Staff costs were also higher than expected due to significant staff movement and the fact that the function of Representative had to be covered through a number of short-term missions of staff members from various other duty stations prior to the reassignment of the present incumbent to the post in early 1994. Furniture, office equipment and vehicles, however, were purchased within given budget estimates.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

28. All posts were extended until December 1995. A field monitoring team, consisting of a Field Officer and four local support staff, including a Telecommunications Assistant, was established at the beginning of the year and posts were created for these functions effective 1 July 1994. Armenia, like all other UNHCR Offices in the Caucasus, has been designated as a non-family duty station due to security considerations and poor health and non-existent/unsuitable education facilities. All international staff members are therefore entitled to mission status, mandatory absence for the relief of stress and procurement missions abroad, which has increased common staff costs.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

29. Initial estimates for 1995 are based on the assumption that the staffing situation will probably remain at the present level. Non-expendable property requirements are lower in 1995 as purchases are expected to be made in 1994. Variations may occur as more suitable office space will have to be sought, which could result in costs for the renovation and refurbishing of premises.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN ARMENIA

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
–	3,552.1	3,155.0	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	4,051.1
–	–	752.6	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	691.7
0.0	3,552.1	3,907.6	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	4,742.8
–	–	139.3	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	144.2
0.0	3,552.1	4,046.9	TOTAL (1)	4,887.0
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
			OTHER TRUST FUNDS	
6,855.5	–	–	Assistance to refugees and displaced persons	–
–	–	150.0	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	–
6,855.5	0.0	150.0	TOTAL (2)	0.0
6,855.5	3,552.1	4,196.9	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	4,887.0